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Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Innovation

New training program helps fill the skills gap

VICTORIA – It's estimated that by 2019, over three-quarters of all jobs will require at least some post-secondary education. To give low-skilled employees a chance to move up and fill these jobs, B.C.'s new \$3-million Targeted Skills Shortage Pilot Program will help local businesses and non-profit organizations train current staff to better meet the demands of a changing labour market.

The pilot program is designed to help low-skilled employees who lack post-secondary training toward a degree or other credentials, gain new skills to improve productivity, take on new responsibilities and advance their careers. The Targeted Skills Shortage Pilot Program targets four high-growth sectors where the demand for skilled workers over the next decade will be strong: transportation and warehousing; manufacturing; health care and social assistance; and professional, scientific and technical services.

Through the program, which will be administered by the non-profit Association of Service Providers for Employability and Career Training (ASPECT), local service providers will help businesses and non-profit organizations identify eligible employees, develop training plans and access funding for training.

For example, an employee in a production line could receive the training required to use new equipment and implement new processes that will both improve the individual's skills and the productivity of the manufacturer. The program could also assist a data entry worker to gain the technical training they need to advance within their company and become a software tester.

Quotes:

Honourable Diane Finley, Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development –
“Our government is taking action to ensure that Canadians have the skills they need to get to work and contribute to our economy. We know that workers in different provinces and territories have different needs; that's why the provinces and territories are best placed to design and deliver these types of programs. The Canada-British Columbia Labour Market Agreement has made this a reality.”

Pat Bell, Minister of Jobs, Tourism and Innovation –

“This pilot program provides a way for employers within B.C.’s high-growth sectors to identify and fill key skills and knowledge gaps in their operations. As part of our Skills for Growth strategy, this is one more way we are helping workers and employers succeed in a B.C. economy that is becoming increasingly dependent on a more skilled and highly trained workforce.”

Norma Strachan, CEO of ASPECT –

“ASPECT is thrilled at the opportunity to partner with our network of community-based employment trainers who are providing the localized support to employers that wish to grow the potential of their low-skilled employees. ASPECT has always believed in the importance of workplace-related training and this program represents an ideal blend of government innovation, administrative capacity and community delivery.”

Quick Facts:

- The Targeted Skills Shortage Pilot Program focuses on assisting low-skilled workers within businesses or non-profit organizations with less than 100 employees.
- Through the pilot, up to \$1,500 per employee or \$7,500 per employer is available to pay for tuition fees and purchase training services, books, manuals and other study materials.
- The program is expected to serve at least 1,200 low skilled employees around B.C.
- The Targeted Skills Shortage Pilot Program is one of many programs funded through the Canada-B.C. Labour Market Agreement that are designed to help meet the current and future labour demands of our economy.

Background:

Under the Labour Market Agreement, the Government of Canada is providing the province approximately \$66 million annually until 2013-14. Through a variety of programs, these funds increase access to training for unemployed individuals who are not currently Employment Insurance clients, including those who are underrepresented in the labour market.

Funding also supports training for employed individuals who are low skilled, in particular, employed individuals who do not have a high school diploma or a recognized certification to reach their full potential in the current marketplace.

Learn More:

- Targeted Skills Shortage Pilot Program: <http://www.aspect.bc.ca/tssp>

- Skills for Growth: www.aved.gov.bc.ca/skills_for_growth/ is British Columbia's labour market strategy, helping to ensure B.C. has the right people with the right skills to fill the over one million jobs that will be available by 2019.
- An online list of all labour market programs and services open to British Columbians at: www.workbc.ca

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